

Teachers' Perception of Cyberbullying in Lebanese Public School

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Abstract

Cyberbullying has become prevalent in schools with the increased spread and usage of technology. The purpose of this study was to examine the degree to which teachers in Lebanon were aware of the concept of cyber bullying; as well as to investigate their beliefs of the best interventional preventional strategies to combat this phenomenon. The study surveyed 149 public school teachers from the different governorates in Lebanon. A survey consisting of 40 items was developed to address teachers' perception of cyberbullying, around 4 areas: 1) the impact of cyberbullying on students, 2) the necessary interventional strategies for cyberbullying inside the school, 3) the suitable interventional strategies for cyberbullying outside the school, and 4) the possible preventional strategies for a cyberbullying program. Data were analyzed using SPSS 21.0 for windows. Results indicated that school teachers recognized the gross negative impacts of cyberbullying on students. While teachers suggested anti-cyberbullying interventional strategies inside the school, they were less hesitant to suggest strategies to confront cyberbullying when students were away from school. They were also indeterminate concerning preventional strategies of this phenomenon. Teachers' perceptions highlight the importance of their active role and the importance of building students character as two major keys for counteracting cyberbullying and designing an efficient anti-cyberbullying program.

Keywords

Cyberbullying, Interventional Strategies

1. Introduction

In the past years, a growing number of studies have addressed school bullying (Lines, 2008; Smith, 2014; Stephens, 2011). This has been linked to the rise of social media, and the use of web 2.0 tools (Masseni, 2014) which contributed to the evolution of bullying into cyberbullying (Masseni, 2014; Deng & Tavaris, 2013; Kowalski, 2008). Cyberbullying has acquired little attention of the Lebanese educators as compared to the remarkable attention of worldwide educators, yet the complexity of the behavioral phenomenon still requires a wide range of further comprehensive investigations and practical research at international level (Kyriacou & Zuin, 2015).

Whether it takes place inside or outside schools, cyberbullying can challenge the entire educational school system including students, teachers, parents and policy makers. When combatting cyberbullying, it is effective to take a whole school approach for promoting a safe school climate (Griezel et al., 2012; Olweus & Kallestad, 2010). Students' positive behaviors are effectively fostered through collaborative efforts of the whole school community. Particularly, teachers are the leaders of educating students and nourishing their various aspects of good character (Lickona, 1991).

Consequently, the beliefs and perceptions of teachers towards cyberbullying play a major role in effectively shaping and controlling the phenomenon of cyberbullying among students (Griezel et al., 2012; Stauffer, 2012). This study addresses the perceptions of Lebanese teachers towards the extent to which cyberbullying impacts students and their view points concerning the necessary intervention prevention policies to combat it.

1.1. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore cyberbullying within the Lebanese school context. It aimed at examining the beliefs of public school teachers in Lebanon towards the extent to which cyberbullying impacts students. Parallel to this, the study surveyed the teachers' perceptions of the necessary anti-cyberbullying interventional and preventional strategies. Particularly, this study was guided by the following research questions:

- 1) What are teachers' perspectives of the impact of cyberbullying on students?
- 2) When addressing cyberbullying inside the school, which interventional strategies are teachers best likely to use?
- 3) When aware of students' cyberbullying away from school, which interventional strategies are teachers best likely to use?
- 4) How effective are specific preventional strategies in decreasing cyberbullying?

1.2. Importance of the Study

When addressing cyberbullying, it is important to consider the existing relation

between the beliefs and actions of individuals (Sassu, 2006). If teachers do not believe cyberbullying is a problem, anti-cyberbullying strategies are not possibly to see positive outcomes. Teachers are the indispensable agents for the success of any school reform (Masseni, 2014). Particularly, without teacher commitment and their devoted involvement in the implementation of any program, the process will likely to be slow and incomplete (Masseni, 2014; Cooper, Slavin, & Madden, 1998). For this reason, it is beneficial to value teachers' perceptions of cyberbullying. Whether a preventional program is to be implemented or an interventional program, the support of teachers is key for success.

Little research has been carried out to explore teachers' perceptions towards cyberbullying (Masseni, 2014; Sassu, 2006). In the same vein, there is an evident lack of research examining Lebanese teachers' views concerning cyberbullying (Ghamrawi & Al-Jammal, 2013). Thus, this study is of value to both national and international readership. With a better understanding of cyberbullying, schools, parents, and community can function more effectively creating safer environments for students (Griezel et al., 2012; Hinduja & Patchin, 2008; Willard, 2007).

2. Review of Related Literature

2.1. Bullying

Bullying is an intentional aggressive behavior involving an imbalance of power perpetrated repeatedly overtime (Masseni, 2014; Olweus, 1993) and has taken immense attention by educators as per research studies (Lines, 2008; Stephens, 2011; Smith, 2014). Bullying related research explored the nature of the behavior and the modes of manipulating its major components: the bullies, the victims and the bystanders (Lines, 2008; Stephens, 2011; Smith, 2014). The victims of bullying, especially those who refuse to inform adults (Masseni, 2014; Li, 2008), are impacted academically and socially with a negative spectrum of depression, low self-esteem, health problems, poor grades, and suicidal thoughts (Roland, 2002). A comprehensive intervention plan that involves all students, parents, and school staff is required to ensure that all students can learn in a safe and fear-free environment (Griezel et al., 2012; Banks, 1997).

2.2. Cyberbullying

The world has become highly interconnected through social interactions where individuals can interact with more anonymity and less monitoring (Shal, 2016). While this has resulted in advantage in terms of self-directed and differentiated learning (Shal, 2016), it has contributed to a more dangerous form of bullying termed cyberbullying (Masseni, 2014; Yilmaz, 2010). With the increased spread and usage of technology, cyberbullying has become prevalent in schools and extended bullying into the cyberspace (Yilmaz, 2010) and into the virtual experiences (Masseni, 2014). Cyberbullying is a new form of bullying involving deli-

berate and repeated harm that is directed at peers via electronic media (Beran, 2005). Several types of cyberbullying have been identified in the literature including flaming, harassment, cyberstalking, denigration, masquerade, outing and trickery, and exclusion (Willard, 2005).

While it is believed that bullying is boy-dominated, studies have shown that cyberbullying is mainly ruled by girls (Stauffer, 2012; Kowalski & Limber, 2007); however, other studies suggest the opposite (Slonje & Smith, 2008).

There exists little evidence on the relationship between age and involvement in cyberbullying (Stauffer, 2012). Some research considers cyberbullying as more common among middle-school-aged children than high school students (Slonje & Smith, 2008), yet others point to rising involvement in cyberbullying throughout the middle school (Kowalski & Limber, 2007).

2.3. Impact of Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying can be more harmful than traditional bullying (Ybarra & Mitchell, 2004a), as it is not bounded to specific time and place (Ghamrawi & Al-Jammal, 2013; Dehue et al., 2008) and the authority of schools over cyberbullying is not a full one (Kyriacou & Zuin, 2015).

While bullying can impact students through reduced academic achievement (Nansel et al., 2001; Rigby, 2003; Smith & Brain, 2000; Ybarra & Mitchell, 2004b), anxiety and depression (Rigby, 2003; Ybarra & Mitchell, 2004b), and school avoidance (Rigby, 2003; Smith & Brain, 2000; Ybarra & Mitchell, 2004b); cyberbullying negative effects range from depression and fear (Kowalski et al., 2008; Raskauskas & Stoltz, 2007) to anger and frustration (Hinduja & Patchin, 2010) and even suicide (Hinduja & Patchin, 2010; Kowalski et al., 2008).

Smith et al. (2008) indicated that the rates of adolescent students who are cyberbullied range from 10% of students in the United Kingdom to 25% of students in Canada and that most researchers agree that cyberbullying incidences appear to be on the rise (Stauffer, 2012). A study carried out by the Lebanese National Center for Research & Development, CRDP (2015) that surveyed 1000 students of ages ranging between 12 and 18 years revealed that 12.9% of students has cyberbullied other students, 8.5% voted for humiliation purposes, and 18.5% shared sexual content against others.

Cyberbullying has also provided a complicated form of bullying that can even target teachers themselves who are cyberbullied by pupils, turning a figure of authority into a victim (Espelange et al., 2013) and thus this phenomenon is highly challenging as it impacts the entire educational system (Kyriacou & Zuin, 2015).

2.4. Combatting Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying is a serious challenge for school administrators, teachers, and staff (Hinduja & Patchin, 2010). Schools are facing difficulties in setting the necessary

policies and disciplines that identify cyberbullying and outline the effective responses towards it (Willard, 2007).

Schools are responsible for taking action to reduce cyberbullying incidents both inside and also outside the school (Stauffer, 2012). It might be tempting to implement an existing anti-bullying program for the purpose of reducing cyberbullying among students, but Ferguson (2007) indicated that the anti-bullying programs tend to be ineffective over time. In addition, the nature of cyberbullying behavior requires different preventional and interventional program that enhances social education (Kyriacou & Zuin, 2015).

However, if teachers do not perceive cyberbullying as a problem, the school's efforts are simply wasted when implementing anti-cyberbullying programs (Masseni, 2014; Stauffer, 2012). The role of teachers cannot be ignored, as research highlights their supporting interventions that impact students' academic and emotional growth (Biggs, Vernberg, Twemlow, Fonagy, & Dill, 2008).

A first step would be to gain the support of teachers by exploring teachers' perceptions towards cyberbullying and educating them about the need for cyberbullying preventional and interventional programs (Hirschstein, Edstrom, Frey, Snell, & McKenzie, 2007).

3. Methodology

3.1. The Sample

The invitation to participate in this study was administered to all the 100 Lebanese public schools who were involved in a leadership development program administered by the British Council serving the Lebanese Ministry of Education and Higher Education. Schools were spread across the six Lebanese governorates: Beirut, North Lebanon, South Lebanon, Mount Lebanon, Nabatieh and Bekaa. 42 schools out of the 100 invited schools reflected interest in the study. 5 - 6 teachers were invited to complete the survey from each school. The total number of surveys sent to teachers in these schools was 213. Along with a copy of the survey instrument, teachers received a cover letter specifying the purpose of the study, assuring anonymity and explaining how data will be analyzed. Out of the 213 surveys sent, only 149 were useful. Thus the sample was comprised of $N = 149$ public school teachers.

3.2. The Research Instrument

Participants completed a survey entitled "Teacher's Perceptions of Cyberbullying" which is an adapted version of a survey constructed by Stauffer et al. (2012). The researcher customized the survey to target four areas of teachers' perceptions of: 1) the impact of cyberbullying on students, 2) the necessary interventional strategies for cyberbullying inside the school, 3) the suitable interventional strategies for cyberbullying outside the school, and 4) the possible preventional strategies for a cyberbullying program.

The instrument consisted of 4 point Likert scale statements corresponding to four performance areas which are: “(SD) Strongly Disagree”, “(D) Disagree”, “(A) Agree” and “(SA) Strongly Agree”. A score of 1 indicates the public school teacher strongly disagrees on that element; a score of 2 indicates that the public school teacher disagrees on that element; a score of 3 entails that the public school teacher agrees on that element; and a score of 4 indicates that the public school teacher strongly agrees on that element.

Additionally, public school teachers also completed a section on demographic information within the survey requesting them to specify their gender, age, and years of experience. The researcher customized the tool and piloted it with a sample of 14 school teachers who were attending a workshop organized by the researcher. Many words were amended after the conduction of the pilot study and hence the instrument was ready for administration with the actual research sample.

3.3. Methods of Data Analysis

Data was analyzed using SPSS 18.0 for windows. Descriptive statistics were used to describe and summarize the properties of the mass of data collected from the respondents. Means scores, standard deviations and percentages were calculated per each item of the survey instrument.

4. Results

4.1. Demographic Data

The sample was (21.5%) males, (78.5%) females, and (42.3%) was of the age range of 31 - 40 years. The majority of the public school teachers (87.9%) had a license degree, (28.2%) had a teaching experience range of 11 - 15 years, and (49%) taught classes of the middle school level. When surveyed on their mostly used social media application, (45.6%) responded for facebook while (39.6%) responded for whatsapp. The majority of the sample (87.9%) indicated that someone they know was cyberbullied. The demographic characteristics of participants are presented in **Table 1**.

4.2. Research Question 1

What are teachers' perspectives of the impact of cyberbullying on students?

Data derived from the first section of the survey was used to respond to the first research question. The scores obtained for the ten items of the “Impact of Cyberbullying” are presented in **Table 2**. In general, the highest percentages recorded showed that the public school teachers are aware of cyberbullying's nature (69.7%), a phenomenon that is expanding among students (60.2%), and even among students to teachers as well (63%). Also, the data revealed the teachers' understanding of the impact of cyberbullying on students, as it has longlasting psychic effects (68.5%) even if it took place away from school

(60.5%). They believe that cyberbullying may prepare students for life (60.5%), yet it is not considered the proper experience for their proper character growth (46.2%). Remarkably, the majority of the sample (52.7%) disagreed to consider

Table 1. Demographic characteristics of participants.

| Gender | Percentage % |
|---|--------------|
| Female | 78.5 |
| Male | 21.5 |
| Age | |
| 21 - 30 yrs | 28.9 |
| 31 - 40 yrs | 42.3 |
| 41 - 50 yrs | 28.9 |
| Education | |
| BS/BA/License Degree | 87.9 |
| MA | 12.1 |
| Teaching Experience | |
| 0 - 5 yrs | 9.4 |
| 6 - 10 yrs | 24.2 |
| 11 - 15 yrs | 28.2 |
| 16 - 20 yrs | 16.8 |
| 21 - 25 yrs | 14.8 |
| 26 - 30 yrs | 4.7 |
| More than 30 yrs | 2.0 |
| School Level | |
| Preschool | 5.4 |
| Elementary | 23.5 |
| Middle | 49.0 |
| Secondary | 22.1 |
| Social Media Application Mostly Used | |
| FaceBook | 45.6 |
| Twitter | 5.4 |
| Instagram | 4.7 |
| WhatsApp | 39.6 |
| YouTube | 4.7 |
| Knowing Someone Cyberbullied | |
| Yes | 87.9 |
| No | 12.1 |

Table 2. Data related to research question (1).

| Item | What are teachers' perspectives of the impact of cyberbullying on students? | SD | D | A | SA | M | std |
|------|--|----|------|------|------|------|------|
| 1.1 | Cyberbullying is an electronic bullying through advanced technologies. | f. | 5 | 32 | 101 | 11 | 2.79 |
| | | % | 3.4 | 21.5 | 67.8 | 7.4 | 69.7 |
| 1.2 | Cyberbullying among students is common. | f. | 18 | 62 | 59 | 10 | 2.41 |
| | | % | 12.1 | 41.6 | 39.6 | 6.7 | 60.2 |
| 1.3 | Cyberbullying by students to their teachers is common. | f. | 13 | 51 | 80 | 5 | 2.52 |
| | | % | 8.7 | 34.2 | 53.7 | 3.4 | 63 |
| 1.4 | Cyberbullying is more psycho destructive on students than traditional bullying. | f. | 24 | 87 | 35 | 3 | 2.11 |
| | | % | 16.1 | 58.4 | 23.5 | 2 | 52.7 |
| 1.5 | Female students are more likely to be affected by cyberbullying than male students. | f. | 37 | 67 | 44 | 1 | 2.06 |
| | | % | 24.8 | 45 | 29.5 | 0.7 | 51.5 |
| 1.6 | Teenagers are more likely to engage in cyberbullying than children. | f. | 1 | 13 | 87 | 48 | 3.22 |
| | | % | 0.7 | 8.7 | 58.4 | 32.2 | 80.5 |
| 1.7 | Cyberbullying toughens kids up. | f. | 58 | 60 | 26 | 5 | 1.85 |
| | | % | 38.9 | 40.3 | 17.4 | 3.4 | 46.2 |
| 1.8 | Cyberbullying has long-lasting negative effects. | f. | 2 | 45 | 91 | 11 | 2.74 |
| | | % | 1.3 | 30.2 | 61.1 | 7.4 | 68.5 |
| 1.9 | Cyberbullying prepares students for life. | f. | 10 | 68 | 70 | 1 | 2.42 |
| | | % | 6.7 | 45.6 | 47 | 0.7 | 60.5 |
| 1.10 | Cyberbullying that takes place away from the school can greatly impact students at school. | f. | 23 | 51 | 65 | 10 | 2.42 |
| | | % | 15.4 | 34.2 | 43.6 | 6.7 | 60.5 |

cyberbullying as more destructive than the traditional bullying. As to the two independent variables, the age and the gender, teachers believed that teenagers are the major age category for cyberbullying (80.5%) regardless of their gender (51.5%).

4.3. Research Questions 2 and 3

When addressing cyberbullying (inside the school) and (outside the school), which interventional strategies are teachers best likely to use?

The data derived from the second and third sections of the survey was used to respond to the second and third research questions of the study. The scores are respectively presented in **Table 3** and **Table 4**. Public school teachers expressed opposing perceptions towards cyberbullying when linked to its place of incidence.

While the teachers disagreed on ignoring cyberbullying as it occurs inside the school (58%), they agreed on ignoring it should it occur when students are away from school (81%). The majority of the interventional strategies for cyberbullying inside the school highlighted by the teachers of sample are: talking to the vic-

Table 3. Data related to research question (2).

| Item | When addressing cyberbullying inside the school, which interventional strategies are teachers best likely to use? | | SD | D | A | SA | M | std |
|------|---|----|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| 2.1 | Do nothing | f. | 24 | 61 | 57 | 7 | 2.32 | 0.79 |
| | | % | 16.1 | 40.9 | 38.3 | 4.7 | 58 | |
| 2.2 | Talk with the cyberbully | f. | 19 | 49 | 67 | 14 | 2.51 | 0.83 |
| | | % | 12.8 | 32.9 | 45 | 9.4 | 62.7 | |
| 2.3 | Talk with the victim | f. | 19 | 49 | 56 | 25 | 2.58 | 0.91 |
| | | % | 12.8 | 32.9 | 37.6 | 16.8 | 64.5 | |
| 2.4 | Take away cyberbully's privileges | f. | 24 | 69 | 46 | 10 | 2.28 | 0.81 |
| | | % | 16.1 | 46.3 | 30.9 | 6.7 | 57 | |
| 2.5 | Mediate/problem solve with cyberbully and victim | f. | 16 | 56 | 62 | 15 | 2.51 | 0.81 |
| | | % | 10.7 | 37.6 | 41.6 | 10.1 | 62.7 | |
| 2.6 | Report incident to cyberbully's parents | f. | 16 | 53 | 48 | 32 | 2.64 | 0.93 |
| | | % | 10.7 | 35.6 | 32.2 | 21.5 | 66 | |
| 2.7 | Report incident to victim's parents | f. | 16 | 53 | 48 | 32 | 2.64 | 0.93 |
| | | % | 10.7 | 35.6 | 32.2 | 21.5 | 66 | |
| 2.8 | Report incident to school administrators | f. | 0 | 7 | 81 | 61 | 3.36 | 0.57 |
| | | % | 0 | 4.7 | 54.4 | 40.9 | 84 | |
| 2.9 | Investigate myself on anti-cyberbullying | f. | 1 | 33 | 98 | 17 | 2.88 | 0.59 |
| | | % | 0.7 | 22.1 | 65.8 | 11.4 | 72 | |

Table 4. Data related to research question (3).

| Item | When aware of students' cyberbullying away from school, which interventional strategies are teachers best likely to use? | | SD | D | A | SA | M | std |
|------|--|----|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| 3.1 | Do nothing | f. | 3 | 9 | 86 | 51 | 3.24 | 0.65 |
| | | % | 2 | 6 | 57.7 | 34.2 | 81 | |
| 3.2 | Talk with the cyberbully | f. | 30 | 106 | 12 | 1 | 1.89 | 0.54 |
| | | % | 20.1 | 71.1 | 8.1 | 0.7 | 47.2 | |
| 3.3 | Talk with the victim | f. | 45 | 91 | 12 | 1 | 1.79 | 0.60 |
| | | % | 30.2 | 61.1 | 8.1 | 0.7 | 44.7 | |
| 3.4 | Take away cyberbully's privileges | f. | 61 | 78 | 9 | 1 | 1.66 | 0.62 |
| | | % | 40.9 | 52.3 | 6 | 0.7 | 41.5 | |
| 3.5 | Mediate/problem solve with cyberbully and victim | f. | 61 | 78 | 9 | 1 | 1.66 | 0.62 |
| | | % | 40.9 | 52.3 | 6 | 0.7 | 41.5 | |
| 3.6 | Report incident to cyberbully's parents | f. | 87 | 47 | 11 | 4 | 1.54 | 0.74 |
| | | % | 58.4 | 31.5 | 7.4 | 2.7 | 38.5 | |
| 3.7 | Report incident to victim's parents | f. | 87 | 47 | 11 | 4 | 1.54 | 0.74 |
| | | % | 58.4 | 31.5 | 7.4 | 2.7 | 38.5 | |
| 3.8 | Report incident to school administrators | f. | 87 | 47 | 11 | 4 | 1.54 | 0.74 |
| | | % | 58.4 | 31.5 | 7.4 | 2.7 | 38.5 | |
| 3.9 | Investigate myself on anti-cyberbullying | f. | 1 | 33 | 98 | 17 | 2.88 | 0.59 |
| | | % | 0.7 | 22.1 | 65.8 | 11.4 | 72 | |

tim (64.5%); talking to the cyberbully “if known” (62.7%) and taking his privileges (57%); mediation (62.7%); and collaborating with the parents (66%) and administrators (84%). On the contrary, the data derived from the sample revealed that the majority of the previously indicated interventional strategies for cyberbullying were demeaned when it occurred away from the school.

Regardless of the place of incidence, the public school teachers agreed on one common basic intervening strategy for cyberbullying which is their active role (72%) in dealing with cyberbullying and investigating for the best intervening strategies.

4.4. Research Question 4

How effective are specific preventional strategies in decreasing cyberbullying?

The data derived from the fourth section of the survey was used to respond on the fourth research question and its corresponding scores are presented in **Table 5**. The public school teachers did not exhibit a clear preventional anti-cyberbullying perception. The majority of their responses disagreed on a set of preventional strategies that included: increasing supervision (45.2%), setting policies-consequences to cyberbullying (45.2%), encouraging anti-bully assemblies (29.7%),

Table 5. Data related to research question (4).

| Item | How effective are specific preventional strategies in decreasing cyberbullying? | SD | D | A | SA | M | std |
|------|---|----|------|------|------|-----|------|
| 4.1 | Increased supervision in certain areas | f. | 54 | 74 | 17 | 4 | 1.81 |
| | | % | 36.2 | 49.7 | 11.4 | 2.7 | 45.2 |
| 4.2 | More specific school policies and consequences to cyberbullying | f. | 54 | 74 | 17 | 4 | 1.81 |
| | | % | 36.2 | 49.7 | 11.4 | 2.7 | 45.2 |
| 4.3 | School-wide anti-bully assemblies | f. | 134 | 5 | 6 | 4 | 1.19 |
| | | % | 89.9 | 3.4 | 4 | 2.7 | 29.7 |
| 4.4 | Facilitate school climate encouraging students to report cyberbullying | f. | 13 | 122 | 9 | 5 | 2.04 |
| | | % | 8.7 | 81.9 | 6 | 3.4 | 51 |
| 4.5 | Increased parental involvement | f. | 51 | 72 | 1 | 9 | 1.89 |
| | | % | 34.2 | 48.3 | 11.4 | 6 | 47.2 |
| 4.6 | Encourage bystanders to stand up against cyberbullies | f. | 12 | 96 | 39 | 2 | 2.21 |
| | | % | 8.1 | 64.4 | 26.2 | 1.3 | 55.2 |
| 4.7 | Classroom anti-bully lessons | f. | 12 | 96 | 39 | 2 | 2.21 |
| | | % | 8.1 | 64.4 | 26.2 | 1.3 | 55.2 |
| 4.8 | Professional development teacher seminars | f. | 37 | 81 | 29 | 2 | 1.97 |
| | | % | 24.8 | 54.4 | 19.5 | 1.3 | 49.2 |
| 4.9 | Build character and moral values | f. | 12 | 96 | 39 | 2 | 2.21 |
| | | % | 8.1 | 64.4 | 26.2 | 1.3 | 55.2 |

involving parents (47.2%), and enhancing teachers' professional development (49.2%). However, the teachers were more determined towards the following preventional strategies: reinforcing the role of bystanders (55.2%), enriching classrooms with anti-bully lessons (55.2%), and building character (55.2%).

5. Conclusion

This study investigated the Lebanese teachers' perception of cyberbullying; an area of research that, to the knowledge of the researcher, has been little addressed in Lebanon and the Arab region. Findings indicate that teachers reflect cautiousness of cyberbullying among students and perceive its negative impact on them. These findings are consistent with the international research on the impact of cyberbullying (Kowalski et al., 2008; Raskauskas & Stoltz, 2007) and a Lebanese study (CRDP, 2015). However, these findings highlight an improved sense of awareness of cyberbullying as compared to the findings of a Lebanese study on "the perception of public school principals of cyberbullying" (Ghamrawi, & Al-Jammal, 2013). Unexpectedly, the Lebanese teachers considered cyberbullying equally impacts students as traditional bullying and that contradicts what the international literature emphasizes, one that considers cyberbullying to be more harmful than traditional bullying (Ybarra & Mitchell, 2004a). This has been attributed to the fact that this form of cyberbullying is not bounded to specific time and place (Dehue et al., 2008) and hence can happen anytime, any place over 24 hours a day and across the whole week. Additionally, the authority of schools over cyberbullying is not a full one (Kyriacou & Zuin, 2015). Also the findings derived from this study contradict what research studies indicate on the relation of gender to cyberbullying (Slonje & Smith, 2008). In fact, Lebanese teachers believed that males and females equally got involved in the process of cyberbullying.

As to the interventional strategies when addressing cyberbullying, findings were consistent with a similar study which indicated that teachers insist to take action against cyberbullying whether occurring in the school or away from the school (Stauffer et al., 2012). However, in evaluating which strategies stand out from the others, teachers reported convergent findings with the study of Stauffer et al. (2012), when aware of cyberbullying occurring at school, they were more likely to carry the following: talking to the victim and the cyberbully, taking the latter privileges, mediation, and collaborating with the parents and administrators. On the contrary, teachers revealed an un clear vision towards cyberbullying that occurs away from the school as they were unsure about all the suggested strategies.

Findings also indicated that while teachers are indeterminate of the preventional strategies of cyberbullying, they were determinate on the importance of building the character of students which indirectly prevent them from being involved in such a destructive behavior. This result adheres with the research stu-

dies that highlight the importance of character development which effectively assist in cultivating students that know the good, desire the good, and do the good (Lickona,1991) and consequently will resist cyberbullying actions.

Remarkably, findings assure that teachers value their own active role in countering cyberbullying among their students whether their role was interventional or preventive. This finding is consistent with research studies that consider teachers as an indispensable agent for any school reform; without their commitment and involvement, implementation of any program will likely be slow and incomplete (Cooper, Slavin, & Madden, 1998).

Finally, the study provides attention to value of the perceptions embraced by teachers in relation to cyberbullying. Whether a preventional program is to be implemented or an interventional program, it is believed that the support of teachers is key for its effectiveness and success.

5.1. Limitations of the Study

This study is confronted with a number of methodological limitations which restricts the extrapolation of its results. The first one of them all is the size of the sample involved in this study. In addition, the criteria used for selecting the schools were limited to the ease of accessing schools. Only 100 public schools involved in a leadership development program were invited to participate in the study. The total number of public schools in Lebanon is almost 1300. So only 7.5% of public school population were involved I this study. It would be desirable to corroborate the obtained results in representative sample groups including the private sector. Also, the research instrument might manipulate respondents' perceptions as it suggests specific strategies against cyberbullying, despite the fact that the researcher included "suggest other" item in the survey to allow open responses and reduce this limitation.

5.2. Recommendations

This study was limited to public schools throughout Lebanon. It would be informative if future research employs a more representative sample of schools. The involvement of private schools would give a more comprehensive picture of the reality of cyberbullying in schools. This is especially that private schooling is more dominant in Lebanon, whereby 70% of students are enrolled in private schools (CERD, 2015). Besides, geographic dispersion would be beneficial allowing for schools for the various governorates of Lebanon to take part. Another recommendation for future research is to approach cyberbullying through the qualitative methodology so as gain deep empathetic understanding pertaining to why students get involved in cyberbullying. In addition, exploring the effect of a character program on cyberbullying would be an important extension consistent with the findings of this study that highlighted character as a main preventive component against cyberbullying.

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